

Customer No.: 31561
Application No.: 10/708,203
Docket No.: 11114-US-PA

REMARKS

Present Status of the Application

Applicants appreciate that the Office Action has allowed claims 9-18 and 21-26 and considered claims 2 and 20 to be allowable.

The Office Action rejected claims 1, 3-8 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Slater, Jr. et al. (U. S. Patent 6,791,119; hereinafter Slater) in view of Nitta et al. (U. S. Pub. 2002/0163302; hereinafter Nitta) and further in view of Oku et al. (U. S. Patent 6,497,944; hereinafter Oku). The Office Action rejected claims 1, 3-7 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tamura et al. (U. S. Pub. 2002/0113156, hereinafter Tamura) in view of Nitta and Oku. Applicants have amended independent claims 1 and 19 to include the features recited in allowable claims 2 and 20, which have been currently cancelled. Applicants have also amended claim 11 to correct the typographic error.

After entry of the foregoing amendments, claims 1, 3-8, and 19 are in allowable conditions.

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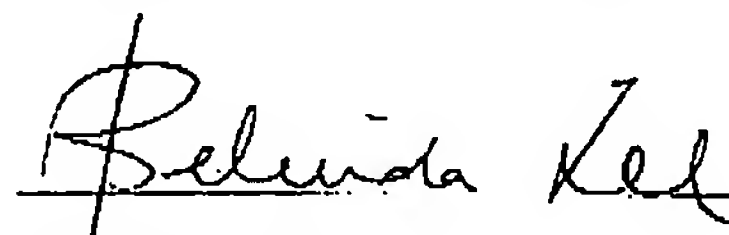
CONCLUSION

For at least the foregoing reasons, it is believed that all the pending claims 1, 3-19, and 21-26 of the invention patently define over the prior art and are in proper condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference would expedite the examination of the above-identified patent application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

Date :

January 4, 2004

Respectfully submitted,


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